The Poetry of Léonie Adams

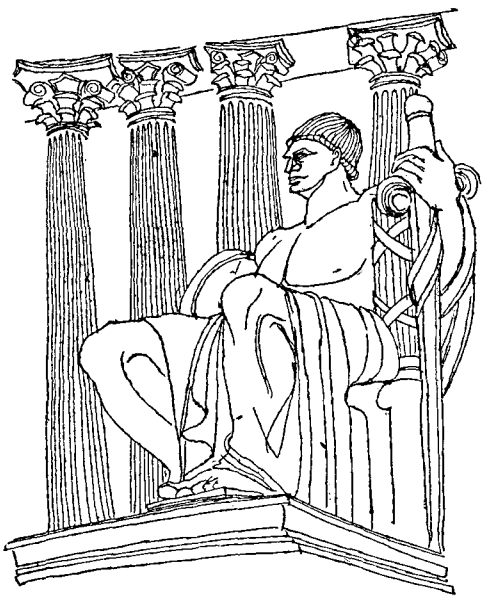
—Wallace Fowlie

THE

Commonweal

The Necessity of Government

by James V. Schall



Germany Today

by George N. Shuster

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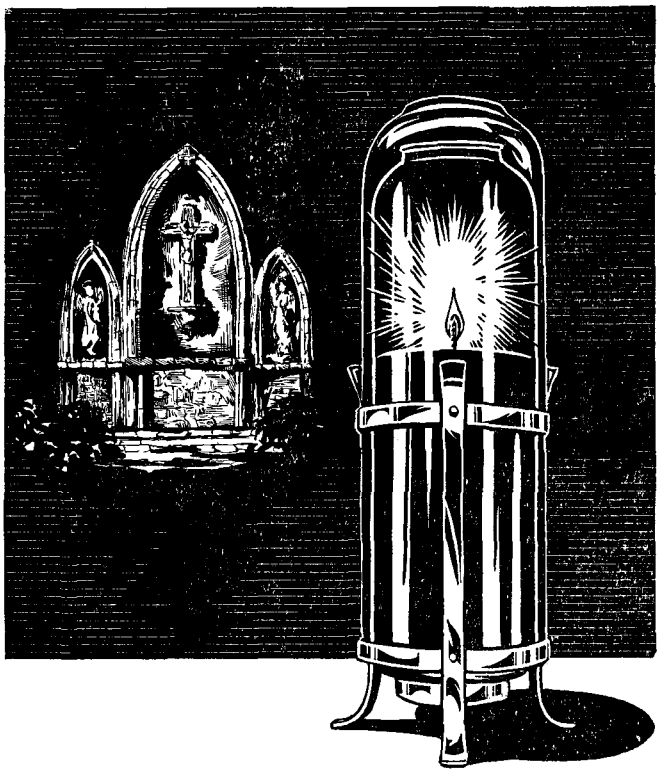

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EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Editor*
JOHN COGLEY: *Executive Editor*
JAMES O'GARA: *Managing Editor*

Associate Editors:
WILLIAM P. CLANCY, WILLIAM PFAFF

Contributing Editors:
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

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THE

Commonweal

week by week

THE GROWING WAR

WE are passing through a curious stage in the cold war. The Soviet Union and China are conducting a propaganda drive hung on the slogan of "peaceful coexistence" while Soviet interceptors emphasize the problems of semantics by shooting down aircraft which fly near the disputed borders of the Eastern Empire and Chinese torpedo boats sink Nationalist ships. And in Washington, where a few weeks ago there was much talk of whether we should go to war over Quemoy, President Eisenhower now speaks about peace and of imbuing our children with a desire for peace. All very curious and very dangerous.

The peaceful coexistence campaign with its Communist cultural missions is meaningless for the obvious reason that such "peace" is to the Soviets a state of tactical advantage in the cold war. However, like other propaganda drives of the past, notably the Stockholm appeal, it finds a limited amount of support among the emotional and those who base their political views on a double standard.

Propaganda about peace, which so devalues the term, must not be confused with the tactical limitations which our counter-action can impose on Communist actions. There is, for example, speculation that the Quemoy attacks of the summer were begun by Communist China as the first steps in the conquest of Formosa. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that in recent months there has been an unusual concentration on this theme in domestic Chinese propaganda. Noise made for the outside world is one thing. Indoctrination of citizens is much more serious, and surely can be interpreted as a sign that China meant—or means—business.

But the Quemoy offensive slacked off. Why? Is this a lull, to be followed by a revival of attacks and a genuine move towards Formosa? Or did the Soviets tell their Chinese friends not to try to bite off indigestible chunks of United States naval power? The latter interpretation is given some support in Washington policy circles.

Either way, whether an attack on Formosa will come after the first of the year or not, the Chinese civil war continues. In mid-November the sinking of a Nationalist destroyer-escort, the *Taiping*, in the East China Sea, dramatized again the continuing war between the Chinese Nationalists and the mainland Communists, and it added a new element, Communist torpedo boats, to the growing war. The sinking took place in waters where the U.S. Seventh Fleet often patrols, and raises the possibility of an attack—by mistake or by calculation—on American vessels.

THIS war is one in which both sides derive certain political advantages—so long as the fighting does not get out of hand; and that qualification does not apply to one of the belligerents, the Nationalists, who have no hope of regaining the mainland without a war which brings American intervention.

Communist China has in this war an external threat towards which the attention of its regimented people can be directed. It has a cause which can be justified before many Asian neutralists (who take the dimmest possible view of Chiang Kai-shek's government) and which serves to keep America in the villain's role in neutralist Asian eyes. On the other hand, war against the Communists is the *raison d'être* of the Nationalist cause and undoubtedly enables them to increase their moral and guerrilla foothold among the anti-Communists on the mainland.

The problem for America is how to keep the lid on this pot; what to do if the Communists extend the war further; what to do if the Communists call us on our "keep them guessing" policy about what islands to defend and what islands to abandon.

In this situation, Mr. Eisenhower's projected treaty with Nationalist China, which would provide for mutual defense so long as the Nationalists do not conduct offensive actions, is of long-range usefulness but can hardly be put into effect when Formosa is under its most severe challenge and

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must in self-defense carry out some offensive operations. Whether the treaty is ever to be placed into effect, and the war shut down from the Western side, depends on whether Mr. Mao will call off his own attacks. And unfortunately Mr. Mao has said that he wants Formosa very badly. We trust that the Administration has faced that fact.

THE DIXON-YATES ISSUE

WHY have the Democrats been able to make such capital on the Dixon-Yates contract? Friends of the GOP would chalk it up to the lack of political finesse of an administration manned by public-spirited amateurs. The avowed objects of negotiating the agreement were: first, curiously enough, to restore public confidence in the nation's utility industry; to set limits to the federal government's production of electric power, which now represents thirteen per cent of the total; finally to curtail federal expenditures and move closer to a balanced federal budget.

The second of these aims brings a big issue to the fore but upon it was compounded a series of charges resulting from certain circumstances in the negotiating and signing of the contract. Among these latter might be mentioned the lack of competitive bidding, coupled with one TVA and one private offer to do the job on more reasonable terms. The protracted secrecy that enveloped the negotiations from the beginning also had a lot to do with engendering public suspicion.

Moreover, the testimony of several eminent witnesses at the Dixon-Yates hearings was far from reassuring as to the power companies involved—undue political influence and the keeping of two different sets of books were prominent in these allegations. With all this in the background it is difficult to be impressed by the assertion of the principals that they offered to undertake this project simply in response to the appeal for government economy in President Eisenhower's budget message, or their contention that "possible earnings are too small to make it attractive as a usual business venture."

The government, if it is so minded, can take over the new project any time within the next three years—according to the final terms of the contract. The real issue is a considerably bigger one. It is the whole debate between public and private power.

The TVA's much debated role as a "yardstick" points to an important need. For utilities tend to be monopolies and they purvey a commodity essential for American homes, farms and industries. Even today, with TVA and rates under regulation, normal earnings are from nine to ten per cent. Moreover, utilities have held up much-demanded electrification for years in certain areas.

On the other hand there can indeed be too much government in business. It all comes down to a very complex and problematical question: Can the utility companies under effective regulation supply most of the power needs of the nation to the benefit of all concerned or should the government set up a whole series of local authorities inspired by, but wherever advisable manifesting considerable variations from, TVA? President Eisenhower is assuredly right when he declares that such a decision calls for the most thorough and prayerful preliminary consideration.

As the Democrats continue to capitalize on the new interest in this big issue, let us hope, however, for at least one clarification. Public power is not at all a question of seeking prosperity through deficit spending as opposed to stimulating private industry. The issue is the extent to which public power and private power can best serve the various elements that comprise the public interest.

NEXT WEEK

SEYMOUR KRIM begins a two-part article on the life and work of Somerset Maugham in the Christmas Book Issue.

"For Maugham the pursuit of both the dollar and the muse was not the impossible daydream that has ruined many other writers. The reason is twofold: it is impossible to avoid seeing from the explicit use Maugham makes of himself in both his fiction and non-fiction that 'to be liked' was a strong need of his in many ways narcissistic personality, as it was, in grander dimensions, of Proust's. Secondly, Maugham's own tastes in literature . . . . were essentially popular, and as we know, the books a writer enjoys reading he tries to emulate. Thus by doing the kind of writing that was to satisfy his own inner needs he was to satisfy those of others—a self-respectful desire to be popular begets popularity with respect."

LESSON OF GUATEMALA

BY this time it should be a truism that Communism seizes its opportunities in countries where a long national history of poverty and want makes personal freedom seem at best academic. In many Latin-American countries the social distress and lack of economic development constitute

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a standing invitation to Communist agitation. Yet despite dramas like the one recently enacted in Guatemala, there is always the danger that public interest in such subjects will disappear with the day's headlines. Now, however, the first step has been taken in a new long-range effort to aid underdeveloped countries through the stimulation of private investment.

Under present plans, the Administration will soon seek Congressional approval for U.S. participation in a proposed $100,000,000 International Finance Corporation. Loans from this new fund could be made to any of the thirty-odd countries expected to participate, but Latin-American countries will be the chief beneficiaries.

The new international corporation will encourage private investments by making loans without guaranties by member governments, such as are now required by the World Bank. And although the new corporation's funds will be relatively small as such things go, its effects will be large and continuing because it will involve a revolving-fund operation. Of the capital needed to begin, $35,000,000 will be provided by the United States, but the corporation will not be activated until at least $75,000,000 is subscribed by a minimum of thirty countries. Other nations have already given their informal approval, and tentative allotments of capital stock have already been made.

The idea behind the fund is not really new; it has been widely discussed in UN and government circles for years. A similar proposal, sponsored by Representative Jacob K. Javits of New York, passed the House in 1952 but failed in the Senate. This time, however, Administration plans are to push the measure vigorously in Congress as a powerful weapon against Communism in Latin America. The idea certainly is entitled to bipartisan support, and the Eisenhower Administration deserves congratulations for the energy with which it is backing the measure.

THE POPE ON SECULARISM

THE warnings of the Pope against Secularism grow increasingly strong. His November 4th address in which he defended the rights of the Church in the temporal order, condemning the modern tendency to build a "wall of separation" between religion and life, was a vigorous re-statement of what has always been the Church's belief: that the secular order is related to man's supernatural destiny and cannot, therefore, be completely divorced from it.

"There are," the Pope reminded his audience, "political problems of concern either to individual nations or to all nations which belong to the moral order and weigh on conscience and which can, and very often do, hinder attainment of man's last end.

"Such problems," he continued, include "the purpose and limits of temporal authority, the relation of the individual to society, and the so-called 'totalitarian' state, whatever be the principle it is based on—complete laicization of the State and public life or complete laicization of schools."

Unfortunately, the secular press treated this address as though it were something startling and new. The New York *Times*, for example, interpreted the Holy Father's strictures against the laicized State as strictures against a State completely controlled by laymen! "Laicized State," of course, means nothing of the sort. It means, rather, a State in which religion is completely relegated to the sacristy, in which Secularism manages every department of life.

But, in spite of the fact that the Holy Father seemed to be emphazing the traditional teaching of the Church rather than enunciating any new directives in the matter of Church-State relations, it is well that his words were given a wide hearing. Secularism is the major threat of our age. It inevitably ends in some form of totalitarianism, whether it is the totalitarianism of Communism, of Fascism, or of a monolithic "Democracy." The Church's fight against it is a fight for man in the true meaning of his freedom and destiny.

This week was marked by the first wave of the new orders for Christmas gift subscriptions, on which we are counting mightily for the successful completion of The Commonweal's 30th Anniversary Subscription Campaign. The 338 new long-term subscriptions received during the week leave 3,237 subscriptions required to reach the important Anniversary goal by January 1st.

LONG STEP BACK

PERHAPS the genius of what people call "the Roosevelt revolution" is that it was, strictly speaking, no revolution at all. True enough, the twenty-five years that have passed since the great stock-market crash have changed many American ideas on the relationship that should prevail between business and government. But comparing the two eras, we think it is undeniable that the system of private property is now stronger, more likely to

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last, than it was in 1929, for all the talk about socialism, creeping and otherwise.

In this connection it is significant, it seems to us, that the fundamental changes carried out by the Roosevelt regime have become an accepted part of the U.S. socio-political-economic fabric. Today the two major political parties differ in their general economic philosophy and in their approach to new problems. But only a resolute minority wants to throw out Social Security, unemployment compensation, government-insured housing mortgages, the National Labor Relations Board, and the like. Nor do we think, as some claim, that this acceptance of the New Deal social reforms is due to a national reluctance to "shoot Santa Claus." On the contrary, we think it represents the widespread conviction that the nation is healthier, stronger, with these features than it was without them.

All this is brought to mind by a news item which came from Cleveland recently but which might well have come from another era. At their annual convention the National Association of Real Estate Boards approved a resolution urging Congress to put an end to the public housing program, describing it as "un-American." After the government had disposed of public housing, the Real Estate Boards recommend establishing a program of rent allowances for "needy families."

What is being urged upon the nation here is, in our view, a determined step backward. It is true that government has absolutely no business participating in economic affairs that can be handled even passably by private groups or individuals. But when lesser agencies and groups have shown themselves unable to deal with a grave social crisis, it is the duty of the government to intervene. Exactly such a situation prevails when it comes to clearing slums and providing decent housing at low cost for low-income families.

To bring pressure on the government now to abandon its already minimal activities in this area of acute social need is sheer nonsense. Measures of genuine reform always bring anguished outcries, as the history of last twenty-five years in this country will indicate. But in the long run both the nation and the system of private property itself are aided by such measures of constructive governmental social action.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

JOURNALS of opinion—magazines in which the free play of ideas, analysis and criticism is welcome—are an indispensable part of any civilized society. And if the society is to be intellectually healthy these journals should be numerous enough to represent the various and, perhaps, conflicting points of view within the community.

In the United States one thinks of six such journals which, week by week, play significant roles in the evaluation of our current affairs. The *New Leader* comments from the basis of its socialist, anti-Communist convictions; the *Nation* continues to represent the far (and often fellow-traveling) left; the *Christian Century* is the voice of a socially conscious Protestantism; *America* and, we believe, The Commonweal, stand for a politically and culturally aware Catholicism, and the *New Republic* fights a battle for the tradition of native American liberalism.

This month the *New Republic* celebrates its fortieth anniversary, and the one hundred and twenty-eight page special issue (November 22) it has published for the occasion reminds us of the historic role this magazine has played in our national life. For forty years the *New Republic* has fought hard, according to its editors' lights, for a decent, progressive society. It has welcomed new ideas, and vigorously opposed mass-thinking in politics and the arts. One does not have to agree with all, or even with most, of what it has stood for in order to be grateful for its struggles.

It is to be expected that journals of opinion will frequently disagree with one another; this is part of their function. We have frequently disagreed with the *New Republic*, but we like to think this has been, and will continue to be, the disagreement of friends. Earlier this month we celebrated our own thirtieth anniversary. We are therefore especially happy to congratulate our contemporary for its forty years. The editors of The Commonweal wish the *New Republic* many more years of distinguished publishing.

THANKSGIVING COLLECTIONS

THE War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference are hard at work in the world's acute distress areas. Wherever the human need is greatest they are on hand. They are in the forefront in rendering aid to the half million refugees in South Viet Nam, the many homeless in war-ravaged South Korea, the destitute Arab refugees in the Near East, the victims of the recent floods in Italy. . . . Hence the Catholic Bishops' money and clothing collections in all local parishes Thanksgiving week provide an unparalleled opportunity to extend a hand to the most needy of our fellow-men of every race and creed.

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The Necessity of Government

"HISTORY DOES NOT PROVE THAT A LACK OF GOVERNMENT IS NECESSARILY A SIGN OF FREEDOM. IT MAY AS EASILY BE A SIGN OF SLAVERY."

JAMES V. SCHALL

RECENT political controversy in this country, there can be no doubt, has rather alarmingly increased in bitterness and animosity. This is not too strange, of course, among men most of whom realize that failure to solve current political problems almost certainly means destruction for the United States. When a nation is faced with the very real prospect of annihilation, fear and uneasiness are bound to be present. The bitterness in our politics today is heightened by the basic cleavages that divide Americans over the means that must be taken if the nation is to survive. Unanimity is difficult in a household in which one brother believes that the other's actions are destroying the very hearth itself.

Out of this chaos of charges and counter-charges, of distrust and disagreement, a strange phenomenon appears to be emerging: Political controversy is beginning to sound like political thought. Men are defending their basic political positions not merely with enthusiasm but with considered reasonings. This is an encouraging event. Frequently, disputed political questions in this country, at least since the turn of the century, have been difficult to follow precisely because no attempt has been made to state a definite political philosophy, nor has there been an attempt to show how conclusions in practical politics followed from this philosophy. Everyone professed to base himself on the rudimentary principles of "America," of "democracy," of "the Founding Fathers." It was dangerous, for example, to disagree with the individualist because the "American way" was understood to be the individualist's way—and no one wanted to be "unAmerican". Now there are signs that we are becoming more inclined to defend our conclusions by relating them to a fundamental social philosophy.

One of the most interesting instances of this phenomenon, and one that is of particular importance, is the spirited defense the new-conservatives are now making of their stand. There has been a tendency among liberals to dismiss this defense as "reactionary" or, simply, ridiculous. The conservatives, however, are arguing well; they are establishing their position on age-old premises in political philosophy. Any attempt to attack their position must fail, therefore, if it does not aim at these premises.

The storm center of the current liberal-conservative controversy has been the power and extent of the federal government. There have been clear indications that the new-conservative attacks on government power are directed, not at abuses of it, but at government power itself. The *nature* of government is the basic question here, and it involves two general issues: 1) The function of modern government itself: that is, is government evil and dangerous in itself or can it be in some sense justified? 2) Bureaucracy and power as sources of greatest danger: that is, does bureaucracy actually indicate a weakness in modern society and if so in what sense? And does governmental power in fact threaten the nation?

ONE of the best presentations of these issues occurred recently when *The Freeman,* a magazine noted for its conservative stand, was purchased by the Foundation for Economic Freedom, an equally conservative organization. On this occasion, *Time,* from its throne atop the mountains of American journalism, remarked that *The Freeman* espoused views of the "extreme right." The editors of *The Freeman,* doubting this judgment, then formulated a very spirited exposition of their views in reply.

We are, I think, indebted to *The Freeman* for this reply, not because we may agree with it—I do not—but because it shows the philosophical reason why so many new-conservatives in the United States today are afraid of a large governmental force, of the United Nations, of increased federal influence, of strong executive power. Here is what *The Freeman* said:

> *The Freeman* is dedicated to the proposition that the society of humans flourishes best under a condition of freedom. . . . What we mean by freedom is quite simple: it is the right of the individual to work out his destiny, with whatever capacities he possesses, without interference

Mr. James V. Schall, S.J. is a Jesuit scholastic at Mount St. Michael's in Spokane.

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> from government beyond that necessary to prevent him from interfering with the freedom of others. We are convinced that freedom is inherent in the individual, the gift of God, and that the function of government, the only function for which it has any competence, is to protect the individual in the enjoyment of that endowment. If it goes beyond that field, if it invades any area of human activity, it necessarily transgresses the freedom of some or all the people. Therefore, freedom is best served when government is small, acting under clearly delimited powers, and is subject to constant surveillance.

This is worthy of John Stuart Mill. Indeed, it is John Stuart Mill. The great utilitarian held "that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others;" and that "the only freedom that deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it."

This doctrine, under a somewhat different form, has also become popular among certain American Catholics. Man in the state of nature, they argue, needed no government. Government comes from sin. It is only necessary to *fallen* man: "That government is best which governs least." The first principle of political philosophy is to restrict the sphere of government as much as possible. Somehow without government men will be better. Clarence Manion, who, as a writer in The Commonweal has recently remarked, seems forever destined to be known as "the former dean of the Notre Dame Law School," is a very energetic proponent of this position.

It is not strange, therefore, that the most outspoken critics of bureaucracy, of the United Nations, the most staunch advocates of Mr. Bricker's amendment, should find themselves united under the standard of a basic political philosophy. Indeed, it would be unusual if they did not find themselves thinking similar thoughts about practical facts which seem to prove their theory. After all, the essentially evil or negative nature of government is a tempting explanation for the tragic realities of this age. For if it be held that government is evil, then any attempt at super-government must of necessity bog down. And the United Nations has bogged down. If it be held that the more government, the more tyranny and decadence, then pervasive civil authority and corruption must always appear together. There is corruption, and the government is everywhere. Again, if the President gets too much power, he will abuse it. There is Yalta and Potsdam. The theory explains the facts; the theory must be true.

Yet, this theory is not true. It explains certain facts and apparently explains them well. But here is the trouble. In explaining some facts, it neglects *all* the facts. That is, it takes some facts to prove the theory, and leaves out others which disprove it, hence neglecting the whole complex scene. A valid theory must accept the unpleasant as well as the pleasant, facts that are difficult to explain as well as those that are easy. It must recognize, for example, the abuses and dangers that follow from a strong government. But it cannot therefore say that government is evil, for that is to overlook a thousand necessary goods which only government can secure.

In view of these necessary goods, government is not an evil nor a negative power but a necessity. The mere material necessities required to keep the world's populace alive could never be provided without the establishment and enforcement of an order in which these needs could be adequately produced and evenly distributed. In fact, the world witnesses today not too much but too little order in this sphere. The required goods can be produced and distributed, that is, the *physical* means exist, but the order in which this can be effectively attained is absent. And that order is absent precisely because a truly effective government, a world government, is absent.

SINCE it is true that, in order to secure certain goods, government is necessary, does it follow that current conservative criticism of bureaucracy and governmental power, the two primary manifestations of government in the modern world, is unfounded? Of course not. Few criticisms are totally unfounded. But these problems must be viewed within a whole context. Attacks on bureaucracy and power must distinguish the abuse from the use, the unnecessary from the necessary. In what sense can a legitimate criticism of bureaucracy and governmental power be made while at the same time recognizing the *necessity* of bureaucracy and governmental power?

A few observations on the nature of the American governmental force may indicate the direction in which the answer lies. The federal government today must cope with some of the most complicated administrative problems ever put to a government. There are the questions of national defense, of European and Asian assistance, of interstate commerce, of labor, of trusts, of social welfare, of the courts, of racial segregation, of the schools. None of these questions can be thrust aside, and none of them can be answered except in terms of a large, efficient, and expert, federal government. All of them demand a measure of "bureaucracy." A simple across-the-board cut in the force and number of government agencies would merely leave unregulated those things which the federal government must regulate. This is not to defend every federal bureau no

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matter how inefficient—or corrupt—it may be. But it is to say that some complex problems exist today that cannot be coped with in terms of the more simple organizations of a previous, lost age.

The question of bureaucracy, therefore, is not one simply of size, so that, *a priori,* we can judge its dangers by its magnitude. A large government staff may indicate merely that a great amount of necessary regulation faces the government. A significantly smaller federal personnel might indicate the tyranny of private non-governmental forces rather than a healthy government serving the common good. History does not prove that a lack of government is necessarily a sign of freedom. It may as easily be a sign of slavery. In the final analysis the question is whether the government is capable, in terms of the common good, of handling the difficulties presented to it. If it is not, it is hard to see how freedom rather than slavery or anarchy can rule.

Granting all this, however, we must, I think, admit that bureaucracy and extensive federal influence do represent a weakness in the American society. They represent the sickness and often the death of the local community, the primary political unit. The American people are for the most part more inclined to look to the federal government to settle their difficulties than is wise or healthy. The federal government, for its part, is often too quick to accept this responsibility. There is little it can do to refuse, however, if the people themselves are unwilling to seek local solutions. The average citizen's interest in local government is very small. And this is to be expected when there is little community life at the local level. One reason for this may be that cities and states are often clumsily organized and inefficient. But this seems to be more an effect than a cause of failure. The basic flaw, I think we must admit, is that most neighborhoods do not contain neighbors, most communities have no community.

Why is this so? The lack of a common standard of morality is certainly a major factor. Radical disagreement on what is right and what is wrong must necessarily divide a community. But there is, I think, another reason just as fundamental. Each man in modern society, except perhaps those in small towns and rural areas, lives not in one common over-all society, but in many particular societies. He works with one society of men—perhaps they are joined together in a union. He prays with another society of men—or more frequently he does not pray with the society of those who do not pray. He went to school with a third society. The parents of the children with whom his children attend school form a fourth group. He buys his necessities from a different group. He is entertained by another. He has little in common with those living in his own neighborhood except a similar street address. His politics find him in yet another arena, as do his intellectual interests.

This condition prevents any real community among men. It is only when all of these communities are one community, when a man's neighbors, his associates in business, his common contacts, are the same that he can live a true communal life. Such a community can be strong because it develops an active person much more effectively than does the present factional society, which seems to make men passive. Today we look to others, to more "vigorous" personalities, for our government, our entertainment, our ideas, our politics. This is the sign of our weakness. In a healthy society a good part of these tasks would be performed by the members of the community themselves. For in a healthy society the individual members must perform the tasks of manhood. No one else can do it for them.

CIVIL power is derived as a necessary adjunct to political authority. Whenever the exercise of political power is reasonable and just, *ipso facto* the use of coercive power proportional to the seriousness of the matter is reasonable and just. Power, then, both moral and coercive, is a property of authority itself and without it authority is essentially changed.

There is no reason to fear power as such if this be the case, rather what must be feared is the unjust use of power, not, however, because it is power but because it is unjust. The attempt to limit the power of a government in terms of a constitution or basic law of the land must not, therefore, be understood to mean the actual lessening of a real power. Rather it means the attempt to define the limits in which the use of power is just. (This is an entirely different notion from the one many of the new-conservatives advance.) Thus in what measure legitimate authority fails to use its power when circumstances warrant, in that measure it fails in its nature and purpose.

The sole justification of political power as distinct from political authority lies in this, that it is the only means possible for realizing the demands of authority. If a government fails to use its power when power is the reasoned means to a necessary end, that government has failed. This is why Aquinas said that "as it is the best thing possible that someone use well the power in a kingdom, so it is the worst thing possible if he use it badly." Many of the current attacks on governmental power as such, especially in the area of foreign affairs, as well as the failure of the government to employ reasoned power to correct real ills when it can effectively do so, are therefore dangerous. They tend to weaken the nature of government itself. For a necessary property of its nature is the use of power to advance the common good.

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Germany Today

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TONE AND TEMPER OF A GERMANY WHICH ONCE AGAIN IS BUILDING A MILITARY FORCE.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

THE citizen of West Germany is bewildered about himself. But he is a great deal more amazed when he reads what is written about him in the newspapers.

Were West Germany not a bone which the Russians desire, it would probably be a rather provincial part of the world having considerable reserves of coal and oil, a quite respectable supply of labor and of management skills, and a short strip of advantageously situated sea coast. The farm population, augmented by refugees from the East, knows how to extract from the land every ounce of edibles it will produce and is willing to work for that ounce from dawn to dusk. As a result the country is what we call prosperous. Certainly nobody could have imagined ten years ago that so much rebuilding of shops, industries, homes and public buildings would be possible. I think myself that the coming to West Germany of millions of expellees, harrowing though it was, has replenished population resources and enriched both present and future. Even if a miracle occurs and there takes place a great movement back to expropriated properties, the expellees will leave behind in all the districts of West Germany a priceless treasure of young energy and young brains. To be sure, there are rich and poor there now; yes, there are very rich people and very, very poor people. But literally no one experiences the kind of destitution which was omnipresent in the last days of Hitler.

But the Russians would still like to have the German bone for themselves, and this has several sorts of consequences. First of all, there is the problem of how to induce them to give up the part they have.

One must bear in mind that the plight of East Germans is the most widely advertised of current phenomena in cities like Duesseldorf and Bremen. Yet it is very complex. If you are a scientist, a soldier or a certain kind of engineer, and are willing to take a chance, you may find that the Russians are anxious to treat you very well indeed. For you will belong to the feudal caste which Communism has created. If, however, you are a worker or a farmer, your rights are virtually non-existent; and should you be in addition a fervent Christian, your chances add up to zero. As a result there exists a kind of three-fold West German response to the situation which will be difficult to understand unless one knows the situation intimately.

The idea that an agreement can be reached with the Russians appeals rather strongly to a small group of intellectuals who argue that if the Kremlin is willing to treat Professor X well, it cannot be so evil-minded, after all. Next come the Social Democrats, who are at least in part favorably impressed by the theory if not the practice of public ownership in the East, and beyond that anxious to strengthen the labor movement by incorporating into it what used to be the powerful unions of Saxony. And finally there is the great amalgam of everybody else—of people who reason that the only way to induce the Russians to suspend their imperialistic operations in Europe is to show them a united West, the attractions of which will render hopes for future Communistic aggrandizement baseless and therewith engender a desire to get rid of the East German headache.

These conundrums have created not a little tension, the effect of which has been most noticeable among former Nazis and among those who during the Hitler period were active in the Resistance movement which led to the abortive uprising of July, 1944. It must be borne in mind that there are quite a number of ex-Hitlerites who have served out varying sentences of jail and ostracism and who are now trying to make a living on the basis of such remnants of respectability as they can muster. Their attempt to form a political party—the SRP—was foiled, but not so easily as is sometimes surmised. Most of them have long since written the Fuehrer off as a charlatan and a failure. But when they are not hypnotized by Russian strength and by the possibility that this strength could win out in the long run, they make propagandistic hay out of the assertion that if the West had not been so foolish and had at the end of the war supported German arms, Stalin would never have engineered the advances

Mr. Shuster, president of Hunter College, is former U. S. Land Commissioner for Bavaria.

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he did. All this throws many who were in the Resistance movement and survived into a sort of panic. Every step taken to strengthen West Germany in a military sense is likely to seem to them a concession to ex-Nazis; and some come to the bizarre conclusion that making common cause with the pro-Russian East Germans is the only way of preventing the ghost of Hitler from coming again to the banquet table.

That, very briefly stated, is the background of the famous John case, which has shaken the Bonn Government's windows, if not its foundations. There are, to be sure, many curios in the psychological cabinet of the former chief of West German intelligence, who on a raw and gusty evening accompanied a very problematical physician into Russian-held Berlin, and these cannot be dealt with here. Yet anyone who has followed the discussions of the affair which took place in the *Bundestag* will be struck by the fact that so much of what was said turned round the antithesis between the "20th of July" and the ex-Nazis. There

can be no doubt that while the defection of John was a severe blow, and not merely because what he could tell spelled disaster for many brave spirits in the East, it was on the other hand a drastic blessing because it brought to the surface hidden sources of conflict which, had they been permitted to develop, might have been troublesome.

IF it had been possible to bring about speedily and effectively the organization of a unified Western Europe, matters would naturally have been different. One hesitates to inquire what might have happened if during the protracted deliberations Dr. Adenauer and Dr. Heuss had not been on the bridge of the West German ship of state.

At this point one must distinguish between the attitude toward the French and toward the Occupation. By and large, the Germans understand their traditional rivals far better than we do. There has of course been disappointment but very little bitterness. The prevailing mood seems to have been derived from the reflection that a united Europe is going to have to come eventually, and that Marianne was merely postponing the marriage ceremony as long as possible.

The Germans have been traveling all over France. Their newspapers are rich in reporting which, while pointing out the social and economic shortcomings of the various parts of Gaul, is also replete with frank and sincere appreciation of cultural achievements. There has also been a clear realization of the fact that the Germans have some things to live down. One may add that the French Occupation of Germany, though it was resented, went off really quite well on the whole.

Yet this Occupation, together with all forms of Occupation, has begun to gall the Germans severely. Mr. John J. McCloy left Germany in 1952, having negotiated changes in the Occupation Statute which removed many of its teeth, and with the implied promise that, exception having duly been made for Berlin, the stranglehold on German self-government would be removed as soon as EDC was ratified. Then nothing happened.

It is no fun having an army quartered on you which can requisition whatever it wants and perhaps seem unnecessarily arbitrary in doing so. There has been so much rubbing of shins and elbows, particularly over the question of housing, that recently not even the most skillful and well-intentioned German municipal authorities could prevent excited and upon occasion quite lurid manifestations of dissatisfaction. To the credit of the British it must be said that they realized before the rest of us did that rigid controls were soon going to pay no dividends in West Germany.

The initiative taken by Her Majesty's Government to bring about the London conference has come like a mundane duplicate of manna from heaven. It illustrates anew how ill we can afford any sort of rift in the alliance which we have, as a result of fateful historical development, entered into with the British Commonwealth.

The most notable thing to say about the London Agreement is that Mr. Eden did not ask without giving. And if his demonstration of faith in the future of a free and united Europe brings the profit it deserves we shall have taken a long step towards peace, which can result only from frank Russian recognition of the fact that the second world war is over and that the independence of Europe is a *fait accompli.* (A step is, to be sure, never the whole distance. Barring unexpected developments, it is wholly unlikely that the results of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements can in a short time be whisked out of the world's view.)

WHAT will be the effect of German rearmament within the framework of the NATO organiza-

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tion? In the first place, we may, I think, safely discount anything like recourse to war on the part of Russia. Twelve German divisions would be a real military factor were atomic warfare effectively barred, as Mr. Vishinsky has interestingly enough proposed. But under present conditions they can become a defensive factor only. The striking power of the Russian air force is so overwhelming that the West German target would be saturated before any effective mobilization of armed forces could take place. If anybody knows that the military map of the world has changed, and that it will be controlled from Washington and Moscow, it is the uneasy successor to whatever may be one's conception of the German General Staff. We are a long way from Moltke and Ludendorff. There is hardly enough manpower in West Germany to form twelve divisions. The Russians can place in action twelve times that many.

Nevertheless, a very great deal depends on the character and orientation of the prospective German army. We shall hope that it can resurrect some of the admirable qualities of the tradition which it can look back upon, while avoiding like the plague the sins of the past. The character and quality of its average non-commissioned officer, for example, were highly commendable. Selected with a view not only to his martial prowess but also to his moral character and his fitness for later appointment to the civil service, he brought to the training of recruits a regard for ethical verities which was of permanent value to the commonwealth. But the officer caste system was reprehensible, as was the tradition of blind obedience and the amoral chauvinism which decreed acts like the march through Belgium in 1914. I have every confidence that those who have been entrusted with the task of effecting German rearmament will seek to preserve the good while attempting to ban a recurrence of what was evil. Yet here, as always, everything depends on the temper of German public opinion.

This opinion manifests considerable positive characteristics as well as glaring weaknesses. The Germans have, perhaps in a measure no one could have anticipated, reestablished their cultural and even their religious traditions. Their school system is pretty much what it was prior to the Nazi time, with some commendable improvements. Some of the ground lost to pseudo-faiths has been recaptured, though by no means as much as could be desired. Travel has had a curative effect on nationalist parochialism. In short, the country is once more from the cultural point of view a going concern. What disturbs the onlooker is the same thing that is troubling throughout Western Europe—a narrowness of social outlook, a fixation in the groove of heritage, a readiness to substitute jealousy for appreciation.

All this might normally mean only the nagging side of life in a big small town. But suppose that someone comes along with a flashy new idea, which promises to lift the curtain all around the horizon, and with pageantry which fires the imagination. What happens then? This is the question mark about Germany. Its citizens have energy, brains, enthusiasm to burn. Will they be content with a lesser Adenauer in striped trousers, or with a generalissimo who never has a chance to show that he is as good as Rommel was?

These are vexing and important questions. I think the answer to them may well be European unification. If the young German can find an opportunity here to help build more ample quarters for his spirit in peace and relative prosperity, he may well settle for the absorption of his often problematical past into a new and challenging future. But if he is not able to find it, he may become a conundrum once more, not because he is wicked but because he is very much alive.

Just now it is the great past which towers above the German mind—the noble past of his classical

theater, his music whether of Bach or Wagner, the cathedrals which have survived, and the towns that have not changed since the Middle Ages. German historical scholarship is once more at its peak, in areas which are concerned with the stormy days of yore. Orff, most significant of composers, has taken his themes from classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. It is Plato (or his disciples, via Cicero, Augustine) who still lives among philosophers.

I mention the current interest in the past here because it is salutary to remember that Germany has a long history—that it did not begin with Hitler or even Bismarck, as popular comment so often suggests, but that more than half of it was hemmed in by Roman walls. From it there went out the impulse to create the Holy Roman Empire. And once upon a time, in Koenigsberg, there lived a thinker named Kant who wrote about the desirability of a European federation. The "old man" who presides in Bonn knows history. Young Germans are learning it, too. We shall hope that they come to the same conclusions as those to which Adenauer has dedicated himself.

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FOR OR AGAINST?

Capitalism: Debates And Definitions

THE *Catholic Worker* has always been able to get a rise out of me. Now I see, in the October issue, where all of a sudden I'm "for capitalism" and "believe it is here to stay," along with some other people I am flattered to be named with, such as Monsignor Higgins, Father Cronin, Brother Schnepp and Ed Marciniak, and a few people I'm not so delighted to be named with, such as Father Edward Keller of Notre Dame (not the Christopher Keller) and the Council of Business and Professional Men of the Catholic Faith.

The statement is actually a quote from Dorothy Day's son-in-law, David Hennessy, and is in a piece entitled "Distributism Versus Capitalism" which is written by Dorothy herself and presumably carries her *imprimatur*.

The piece is a kind of sequel to one in the September issue, which refers to the conflict in New Orleans between Archbishop Rummel and a group of Catholic businessmen who took full-page ads to challenge His Excellency's vigorous opposition to the Louisiana "right-to-work" law (outlawing all forms of union security).

That piece was written by Paul J. Clarke and it goes on to describe the New Orleans incident as perhaps "only a prelude, a patrol action in force, to a larger scale battle" between the "reactionary" and "liberal" wings of the Church in America. Father Keller is cited as a leader of the former wing and Msgr. Higgins of the later.

The piece concludes, "If the reactionary bloc should expand, every progressive step the Church in America has taken to apply the social teaching of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII will be destroyed."

This is a gloomy prediction, but as I first read it I had the cheerful thought that the *Catholic Worker* was at last making an act of faith in these same papal social teachings. Dorothy's piece in the October issue sets the record straight. The *CW* is not lining up in a solid phalanx with what Clarke calls "the liberal wing" of the Church. And the reason is that this so-called "liberal wing" is different from "the reactionary wing" only in degree, not in kind.

Father Keller's group, Hennessy-Day maintain, "are all for pure and unadulterated capitalism," whereas the Monsignor Higgins group are "trying to make the best of our present capitalistic system, patching it up in other words."

I had always thought of myself, and the other people whose names were associated with mine in the *CW* piece, as more anti-capitalist than pro-capitalist, and so it came as something of a shock to see myself as an old friend sees me, namely, just another buttress to the capitalist system.

The shock gave rise to reflection, and what is for me a considerable amount of research: I reread an article in *Social Order* that appeared last May, a piece by Father Bernard W. Dempsey, S.J., entitled "But Don't Call It Capitalism."

After trying for nine scholarly pages to arrive at a scientific definition of capitalism, Father Dempsey concludes: "The answer is that there is no such thing as capitalism. The word is incapable of scientific definition; it exists only in the Marxist dream world. . . 'Capitalism is what Marxists are against' is the only definition that will cover all cases. The term is no more than a socialist dirty word for use in the rough-house of agitation."

THIS is a rather neat, if violent, solution on Father Dempsey's part to the problems created by a Christian approach to the word "capitalism." It is rather like the attitude of those students of "liberalism" who after wading past the sixteenth irreconcilable meaning, throw up their hands and cry, "Outlaw this word—off with its head!" In an excellent piece on "Liberalism" in the October issue of *Social Order* (What would I do without this magazine?) Thomas P. Neill has the reply to such an attitude: "Unfortunately words are defined by usage rather than committees and guillotining a word editorially does not kill it. It goes on being used."

As a matter of fact, Father Dempsey himself gives a pretty good definition of capitalism at the end of his piece when he pleads for less concern with capitalism and more concern with institutions. He adds:

"We have the institution of private property, a good thing but inadequately governed by social justice because that fertile notion has not been made operative. We have the institution of a market economy for goods and services, highly conditioned by monopoloid controls of both. Commutative justice is not always easy to observe in these markets even by him who is most anxious to do so. The institutions within the market are not organized with a built-in bent to make the promotion of the common good an easy thing while observing commutative justice. We have banking, monetary and fiscal institutions which facilitate the institutional usury by which the benefits of saving are swept to those who have not saved."

Father Dempsey makes it clear that when "the good

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society" is created it will not include these features of our present economic system. And he winds up, "When that good society is achieved it really doesn't matter what it is called. But let's not call it capitalism." So Father Dempsey, who once lined up with General Motors against Walter Reuther in the famous "ability-to-pay" debate, seems to be more anti- than pro-capitalist himself.

IF we look to the Vatican for guidance, we get even more emphatic answers. Count della Torre, editor of *L'Osservatore Romano,* is on record as stating that "Communism itself, as an economic system apart from its philosophy, is not so . . . in conflict with the nature of Christianity as is capitalism." And he goes on: "Capitalism is intrinsically atheistic. Capitalism is godless, not by nature of a philosophy which it does not profess, but in practice (which is its only philosophy) by its insatiable greed and avarice, by its mighty power, its dominion."

The Popes have not been quite so outspoken in condemnation. In fact Father Dempsey quotes Pius XI on the " 'capitalist' economic regime" which the Holy Father defined as "that economic system wherein, generally, some provide capital while others provide labor for a joint economic activity," with the Pope concluding:

"Leo XIII sought to adjust this economic system according to the norms of right order; hence it is evident that this system is not to be condemned in itself. And surely it is not of its own nature vicious."

But Father Dempsey doesn't quote the passage a few paragraphs later (this is in *Quadragesimo Anno*) where Pius XI describes the "changes which the capitalist economic system has undergone since Leo's time," that is, between 1891 and 1931. He continues:

"In the first place, it is obvious that not only is wealth concentrated in our times but an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship is consolidated in the hands of a few, who often are not owners but only the trustees and managing directors of invested funds which they administer according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure."

After some very harsh words which appear to be directed at investment bankers, the Pope adds: "This accumulation of power and might, *the characteristic mark, as it were, of contemporary economic life,* is the fruit that the unlimited freedom of struggle among competitors has of its own nature produced, and which lets only the strongest survive; and this is often the same as saying, those who fight the most violently, those who give least heed to their conscience." (italics added).

This, I submit, is a highly anti-capitalistic statement. There have been changes for the good in capitalism since 1931, notably in America, which is not so bound to the cartelization and class stratifications that you find in Europe. The New and Fair Deals have had their effect even on the Republican Party. But taken on balance it seems to me that the social teaching of the Church must still lead us to oppose our current economic system, whether or not we call it capitalism, and we usually do.

This is not to say that we should or can oppose everything in the system. But simply answering the question: "Are you for it or against it?" I believe the answer of a Christian must be "I'm against it." And that for the simple reason that the system is, all in all, more unChristian than it is Christian.

IT is nice to be able to take cover behind the tiara of the Pope when you criticize capitalism. And I sympathize with Paul Clarke when he writes in the *Catholic Worker*: "The liberals in the Church hold that these [papal] encyclicals are the most vital topic on the hierarchy's agenda today. The working class is looking for a definite statement of mandatory social policy that will squelch the individual, opportunistic interpretations that can only result in Chaos. . ."

However, if you are going to take cover behind the tiara, basic etiquette dictates that you don't try to elbow it off yourself. In the same September issue in which Clarke writes the above, another article entitled "Catholic Worker Positions" puts the *CW* on record as rejecting the position taken by the Popes on the wage contract, on the need for action by the State, and, by implication, the whole papal position on private property and expropriation.

I think we may be in for that "larger scale battle" that Clarke speaks of. The conservative wing of the American Church has powerful friends in powerful places. In justice to Father Keller, the right-wing spokesman, he is not "for pure and unadulterated capitalism," as David Hennessy and Dorothy Day would have it. His position is: "This Christian social order would not require radical changes in the institutions of American capitalism," and in practice he defends most of the antediluvian positions of the National Association of Manufacturers and the "right-to-work" mob. His admission of *some* change does not make him any less dangerous, but rather more so.

What I would like to see is a little closing of ranks in the liberal wing. I suppose it is late in the day to expect the *Catholic Worker* to embrace the encyclicals without some pretty fancy "individual interpretations," but I still have faith in Dorothy Day and the practical common sense that lurks beneath all that romantic social theory.

JOHN C. CORT.

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THE STAGE

PAN

"OH, for an hour of Herod!" cried Mr. Anthony Hope, swashbuckling a path through the spongy felicities of "Peter Pan." Pity Anthony: he did not live to see Mr. Cyril Ritchard writing a large and stylish signature across the present production with a fine Restoration hook. Mr. Ritchard, in a wonderfully prickly performance—flowing with unction and tartly spiked with vinegar—quite makes us believe how delicious was that hand for which the alligator hotly ticks. His villainous Captain Hook leers with the pleasure of pure, gratuitous evil; he suggests an animate impulse of Charles Addams' gothic imagination. To watch Mr. Ritchard dance a sporty tango as he wickedly plots; to be privy to his adventures with the vocabulary of piracy—how he will lusciously intone the false *bonhomie* of "me hearty" or "my bucko," then, turning with distaste, spit out the dregs of the offending barbarism with the hauteur of a Congreve fop: that is to be privileged with a revelation of how art may shape the scrappy tags of stage convention to its own rich, fresh purposes.

Yet what of Sir James Barrie's fantasy, that masterpiece of our salad days, green in judgment though hardly cold in blood: how is it served? Sadly, Pan must cope here not merely with adult disbelief and the rapacious Hook, but with a very dim musical score indeed, featureless, a cipher. The lost opportunity weighs heavily on the evening—so much that is dully literal ends by transforming fancy into incredible fact—and all the generous efforts of Mr. Jerome Robbins, the choreographer, and Miss Mary Martin cannot quite aerate its thickness. Mr. Ritchard gives the performance its style, Miss Martin its *élan vital.* To her ingratiating, downright American personality, she allies an artfulness secure and accomplished: a little passage of finger shadow-play, the delicious fooling with Hook, show an artist not content to trade on solely natural graces of temperament. Occasionally, in the play's more vulnerable areas, Miss Martin's scrubbed brightness goes a little hard and metallic: "so you don't want to grow up, eh, Pan?" one is prompted to ask menacingly. But the lapse is only momentary, the charmed circle quickly closes, and our affections are as tightly reined as ever.

A sumptuous production crowns the work, almost, indeed, oppresses it. (What, one wonders, would the scenic designer, Mr. Peter Larkin, have done with the scenario Barrie wrote for a silent film version, in which the flight to Never-Never-Land is made via New York, with a temporary stopover in the aggressive embrace of the Statue of Liberty!) The evening lives chiefly in moments, and whatever the later attritions, the first act is a masterpiece. Here peace enfolds the lovely scene of Edwardian domesticity; Nana lolls shaggy and maternal; a tender lullaby closes the day. Suddenly, through the wide and darkened window, Pan springs in an arc of emerald light. The heart quickens and takes flight; pleasure washes over one irresistibly. The core of innocence which lies at the root of Barrie's fantasy has never been so beautifully exposed, and if a shadow of commonplace sentimentality increasingly blurs it, why that is no more than life does to most of us, and perhaps it is impertinent of the faithless to ask for more than one miracle. (*At the Winter Garden.*)

FRAGILE FOX

MR. Norman Brooks' melodrama of the late war blends with small dexterity the mixture as before, but these trite crises of conscience (punctuated by gunfire) are too arid—and the life observed too conventional—to be of more than the most desultory theatrical interest. (*At the Belasco.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

PARASITES IN PARIS SITES

IN F. Scott Fitzgerald's excellent short story, "Babylon Revisited," a father returns to Paris in the early thirties to reclaim his daughter from a sister-in-law who has been caring for the little girl since her mother's death—a death for which the sister-in-law blames the man. But was he to blame? Not really. He and his wife played with that fast group of expatriates who romped through Paris in the Jazz Age. Now, somewhat older and wiser, and contrite, he wants to settle down and make a home with his daughter, but his unforgiving sister-in-law, at the tale's grim finale, sends him away alone. There is more to the story than this, of course; and there is much more to the movie made from it. The makers of "The Last Time I Saw Paris" saw fit to move the time forward some twenty years; and a long, too long, flashback to V-E Day and the post-war period in Paris tells what happened to this man and his wife in those giddy hard-drinking let's-live-fast-and-furiously days.

Although the film gets a little tiresome as it establishes over and over how irresponsibly gay these people were during the post-war days—especially the wife and her playboy father (nicely playboyed by

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Walter Pidgeon)—the picture is worth staying with; it becomes more and more engrossing as Director Richard Brooks builds suspense in the final third when the characters really get down to the business of acting out their pathetic drama. Van Johnson gives a moving performance as the man who tires of his wife's inability to grow up and turns to liquor. Elizabeth Taylor, looking more radiant than ever, makes the wife believable, if not entirely understandable. And Donna Reed is excellent as the sister who carries a secret yen for Van through the years and is intent now on making him suffer for his indiscretions. Hers is the most interesting role in the film and I'm sorry it was not developed more fully. I suppose few Hollywood films would have had the nerve to retain Fitzgerald's bitter finale, so I won't complain about this ending which is certain to leave the audience teary-eyed. Jack Cummings' production in Technicolor is good throughout; the script, by Julius and Philip G. Epstein and Richard Brooks, in spite of its deviations from the Fitzgerald period has caught the sweet-sad tone of the original.

IF ever a film was well named, it is "Phffft" which is about practically nothing. Jack Lemmon and Judy Holliday play a bored and bickering husband and wife who decide to separate. A flashback reveals they got married during the war and lived happily ever after—for eight years; and now they get a divorce for practically no other reason than pique. Judy and Jack are remarkably charming performers, but the script George Axelrod has written for them requires them to portray remarkably naive and inconsistent people whose attempts at finding new playmates (Jack Carson and Kim Novak) after the divorce are pretty futile. Director Mark Robson, whose specialty has been the development of characterization, finds himself at a loss in handling the "sophisticated" comedy that relies on off-color remarks and shallow characters for fun.

FULLY aware of the successful "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," a new musical called "Athena" tries to capture the same effervescence and success. It doesn't have a chance. Producer Joe Pasternak and Director Richard Thorpe, both experienced in the field of comedy and musicals, couldn't quite make up their minds on this one.

Starting with satire of California faddists, vegetarians, numerologists and various crack-pots, the picture mixes light comedy with stale jokes and pretentious production numbers and winds up neither fish nor fowl. The seven sisters, led by sweet-voiced Jane Powell and delightfully vivacious Debbie Reynolds, are winsome enough, but except for one cute song-and-dance number, are given too little opportunity to display their charms. The only character that develops at all during the course of the story is the Boston lawyer played by Edmund Purdom who puts the faddists in their place with such lines as: "Love is better than numbers and people are more important than vegetables." Just how Vic Damone wins Debbie is never quite made clear. Neither is anything else.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

BOOKS

The Poetry of Léonie Adams

WALLACE FOWLIE

MORE than twenty years have gone by since the publication of the last book of poems of Léonie Adams. A new generation of students of poetry has grown up during these years when it was impossible to find her poems, except those which have been repeatedly anthologized. Now at long last, her collected poems have appeared in print [*Poems: A Selection*. Funk & Wagnalls. $3.]. It is a work of modest proportions but one of high significance in the history of American letters.

The world of Léonie Adams is one of forms and pure relationships. Her gaze, as it fixes now on this object and now on that, is never intercepted by dreams, never blurred by mistiness. It is clairvoyant. She sees the formal rigor of all the things she looks at. And the emotion which these things generate, no matter how subtle or delicate it is, finds the exact word with which to express itself. Her poems—many of them

Mr. Fowlie is the author of *Clowns and Angels, Rimbaud,* and other works of criticism.

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brief—testify to a very real world of nature, and at the same time to a willful abstraction which isolates all the objects considered.

A lyric is a performance for Léonie Adams, as it is for the traditional metaphysical poets, during which a real object is raised to its highest pitch of suggestive power, endowed with a far-reaching radiation, invested with potentially explosive energy. These poems, to have reached their present purity, must have undergone many successive eliminations of the spontaneous answers and formulas which familiar objects easily call up. These are not poems in which the poet transcribes the first impulses of sensibility, the first questions provoked by an object and answered immediately by a sensibility. If they were, they would not be so capable as they are today, of releasing in the reader such intense poetic enjoyment, such a relentless exercise of the imagination.

Because of the absence on these pages of the usual religious themes associated with metaphysical poetry, they testify more obliquely, but just as pervasively, to the sacred character of poetry, to the ancient idea that each event in a human life and each object of nature signify something else. Poetry thus defined illuminates and explores. The words used are chosen for their possibilities of suggestion, for the spell which they may be able to cast over the sensibility of a reader. The syntax, just as important as the single words, assures the efficacy of this spell. The form of the verse, its length, rhythm, mode, weight, is like the elaborate setting for a jewel. Like the major poets, like a Yeats or a Mallarmé, it seems to me that Miss Adams has now, with this selection of her poems, forged the kind of verse or setting which is uniquely hers, the syntax that responds best to her temperament and experience, and needs simply from poem to poem to change the jewel, whether it be theme or metaphor.

IN the earlier poems, those taken from the first two volumes, *Those not elect* (1925) and *High Falcon* (1929), the personal elements are the places, the beings, the things where the poet expected and received a revelation. Already her favorite word was "the heart." I choose a few examples from a long litany: "pursued but by the heart;" "Oak heart;" "the brooding heart;" "the heart is not so light;" "the heart's poor confusion;" "the simple heart;" "the heart will sweeten;" "my heart had countless strings;" "the dusty summer of my heart;" "the naked heart."

The word is still the favorite in the new poems, but it is more richly enshrined, more luminous with the vision of years, more mysterious like the poems themselves in which the tone of celebration is more intense. In the new poems it is difficult to isolate the heart from its full context: "Like a rich heart, well said in sighs;" "And my heart beat, but only as to be;" "The heart rose stifling where it lay;" "Here all that was, was frail to bear a heart;" "And meant you, heart, to close?"

The thought in these poems, especially the new poems, closes in on itself, and becomes more mysterious as it becomes more precise. Emotion is always vague, but the emotion in these poems is brilliant and lucid. The mysteriousness of the experience profits from the preciseness of the expression. The key-word, heart, placed at the beginning, or the middle or the end, illumines and explains the entire piece. The first draft of each of these poems might have been a description. The final draft, now printed, is a system of allusions and correspondences, which gives forth a quality of intellectualized emotion and an atmosphere of enigma and secretiveness.

THE qualities of Miss Adams' poetry, which were visible in her first two volumes, have deepened in the new poems. She demands now more from language and far more from the final poem. She is moving in the direction which preciosity always indicates in its highest instances.

Preciosity begins by defining art as a technique without any practical goal, and it ends by revealing a strange power won over some of the most mysterious forces in the world because of the unsuspected potentiality of words. In its final phase, precious poetry becomes a means of knowledge offering to the intellect of man far more than the intellect alone can discover.

Sentiment and thought are so rigorously submitted to the transformation of words, in such poems as "The Runner with the Lots" and "The Summer Image," that they are forced into another order, a metaphorical order which endows them with a new meaning. Miss Adams is not interested in sentiments which have not been policed or deflated, which have not been recast in a form that purifies them. To define precious art as a game or an exercise is to ignore its fullest achievements. It is art reduced solely to the means and the function of art. It exists solely by the meaning which it expresses. To attach to the art of Léonie Adams the term "precious" is simply to indicate that her use of the artifice of ellipsis and metaphor has become natural to her. In the most difficult and the most intricately-formed images she reaches the purest cadence of her art.

Readers of Léonie Adams will ask, what does such and such a poem mean? They will ask it because of the deeply-entrenched belief that each poem has a meaning. Her best commentators will, I predict, be prudent and humble. The meaning of this kind of poem is so inextricably bound to the language which

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expresses it, that it does not have meaning in an ordinary sense. The meaning is the complete poem in all of its multiple relationships because it is a poem without accidents and without accessories.

When a poet speaks in daily life, he uses language, as we all do, as an instrument for comprehension. But when he writes a poem, in the tradition of poetry to which Miss Adams belongs, his language is not an instrument. The poem exists by itself, in its sounds, rhythms, images. Its meaning is its form.

LEONIE Adams is a celebrant-poet. Her poems demand an extreme attentiveness on the part of the reader. No automatic deciphering is possible here. She invites a reading that has to be a kind of belief. The poem is so closely woven that when a word appears, it establishes a relationship with the surrounding words. Cadences are contrasted from line to line. The emphasis moves from verb to substantive to epithet. Conscious, from the beginning, of the possibilities of her art, Miss Adams has worked ceaselessly in the direction of these possibilities. Her talent has been preserved from any utilitarian exploitation. She began where real literature begins, just beyond the story-telling and the systematizing of ideas, and she has never left that realer realm. She leaves nothing to chance. She maintains the privilege of presenting to the world a work intact.

The poem, "The Wood," of fifteen short lines, shows her method and her art. The wood is her most familiar setting, and in this particular piece, the poet is concerned with the high wind renting the leaves. But the leaves are those of the mind. The outer world is merged with the inner world because poetry of this highly metaphysical and even baroque quality has as a necessary condition the possibility of releasing sentiment or thought from the object which incites it.

> So blast and rot have the hour,
> And sinew and air scream,
> Because too lofty a thing
> Withers in mastery.

The wind renting this particular wood participates in the character of sentiment. The poetry of Léonie Adams has its retreats, its chosen places where the sensibility of her years and of the historical years of her age is described. Each poet is called upon to live, vainly perhaps, the paradoxes and the catastrophes of his period. In this poem, she is saying—Open your eyes and behold the marvels of a *wood,* marvels which have never ceased. The *wood* which a gale winnows bears the meaning of our destiny. The sacred is present here as elsewhere.

This might be called by some the poet's fetich-creating power. For such a poet as Miss Adams, I should imagine that metaphysics is a question posed by every instant, and existence is the answer given by every instant.

Poetry is the possible use of all subjects: a violet, a harvest, a beech tree, an evening sky, a katydid. The poetic delight grows in the different ways by which the subject is seen and the different degrees in which it is intensified. Finally the poem rests, shimmering with its countless intercommunications, shackled in its words. The surprises are held in reserve. They will be the discovery of lights on parts we once thought clear.

This is the conviction to hold when reading "Thoughts on a violet," the last of the new group of poems and perhaps the most difficult in the volume. Plato is here, in "the imprint of the manying one," and the psychologist's "solipsist," and the extreme baroque artist in such a line as "Perished to perishing version gone."

In such a poem as this, Léonie Adams uses her art to search out every reflection of an invisible order. She is a watcher at the extreme darkness of love and gentleness. She will be called "a poet of nature" because she does have, visible in the earlier and later poems, a spontaneous Franciscan character in her joy at magnifying the cosmos. But she should be called the poet who has undertaken a metaphysical reintegration in a century when many poets, the surrealists especially, have been engaged in just the opposite process, that of disintegrating the cosmos. The agreement between *her* nature and nature is Franciscan, but it is also a nostalgia for what is perfect and intact. Always in her poems, subtly felt, is the ancient wound of Love.

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Hope and Disappointment: A Study of French Politics

THE DEATH OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC. By Ronald Mathews. Praeger. $5.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

FRENCH politics are of the stuff that caricatures are made on. The spectacle of a Balkan-like political life, the excursions and alarums of premiers entering and premiers exiting, the parliamentary wrangles like the one over the Presidency of the Republic—these would indeed be comic, if they were not tragic in democracy's terms. Even tragic is not the word. There is rather poignancy here, where one is confronted with the present reality and contrasts it with the idealism and high expectations which the unity of the Resistance movement engendered.

The Death of the Fourth Republic, by Ronald Mathews, is an attempt to trace the history of this development. It is a partisan, journalistic, opinionated and highly readable book. It would take a book of equal length even to discuss adequately the value of each judgment in Mr. Mathews' torrent of position-taking. Yet it is clear that this book as a whole is saying some very important, and very true, things.

What is the Fourth Republic? Legally, it is still in existence. But in terms of what it was meant to be, Mr. Mathews is accurate in writing its obituary. Whatever the ultimate significance of Pierre Mendès-France may be, no one, I think, can say that he has solved the basic political crisis of French life, or even that he has returned French politics to a shadow of its previous hope. That hope, for the Fourth Republic, was an exalted one.

This is how Mr. Mathews describes the expectations of the Fourth Republic: "Its economy is to be a planned one, free from the domination of 'the great economic feudal barons,' inspired by a humanitarian Socialism, which shall work for the happiness of the common man. Its political institutions are to ensure stability, for 'a law changing a corner of economic life can be passed in a matter of hours; planning calls for long study and the logical development of ideas.' With these ideas is usually associated a fourth: the motive force of the new regime is to be a great new party, 'the Party of the Rights of Man,' 'the French Labor Party,' or the 'Rally of the Resistance.' "

The France that this Republic was to replace was the France of the thirties, the nation which had passed out of existence in the humiliation of defeat at the hands of the Germans. This new France had been forged in the common cause of the Resistance, and it was to unite the Catholic, the Socialist —and the Communist. Where did the ideal flounder?

The Fourth Republic began to die in the first moments of its existence, at the point of victory.

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The French bourgeoisie balked at the measures necessary to stamp out the black market. And in making this point, it is important to remember that the ruling class of French capitalism is, more than any similar class, devoid of imagination, short-sighted, and politically primitive.

But France's trouble did not lie with the bourgeoisie alone. Among the workers there were two main sources of disintegration. The first was the Communist Party of France. In the unity of the French Resistance, the Communists had actually been playing a hypocritical double-game. Secret Party members sat in the councils of the Resistance, and there was a shoddy record of intentional Communist betrayal. Many Frenchmen were attracted to the Stalinists because of their courage and self-sacrifice, and by their protestations of unity. But the protestations were a sham, and this fact is central to an understanding of the tragic development of the Fourth Republic.

The second problem in working-class politics was that of the French Socialist Party, the SFIO. It had long been a highly bureaucratized, conservative party, appealing to the petty-bourgeois civil servant rather than to the proletarian. And when the question of cooperation with Catholics arose, all of its dogma and cant and ritualistic obeisance to an anti-clerical tradition came to the fore. The SFIO insisted on its traditional policy of intransigence on the question of State aid to Catholic education. No compromise was possible. Given the treason of the Stalinists, only an alliance between the new "Catholic left" and the SFIO could have provided the basis for a government dedicated to the ideals of the Fourth Republic. But the French Labor Party, betrayed by the Stalinists, was now burdened with the weight of partisan memory; it was impossible.

The result? A Stalinist Party which went into absolute opposition; an ineffective Socialist Party; and a Christian democracy moving toward the right. The plight of the thirties was caricatured. The deputies who gave lip-service to the revolutionary slogans may have had the numerical majority, but power was exercised—when it was exercised—by conservative coalitions. Granted this state of affairs, the expectations of the Fourth Republic, the break from the past, were indeed dead.

As I mentioned before, Mr. Mathews recounts this history in as positive a manner as is conceivable. One cannot vouch for the validity of every one of his judgments, but one cannot fail to be impressed by the total impact of his study. His book makes important reading.

The Meaning of "Modern Literature"

THE LITERARY SITUATION. By Malcolm Cowley. Viking. $3.75.

By PATRICK F. QUINN

"Each age, it is found, must write its own books" — so begins one of Emerson's famous aphorisms. But it ends with a qualification: "or rather, each generation for the next succeeding." This is more cautious and more accurate. College students, I have noticed, are interested in contemporary literature only if it be not too contemporaneous. What they want to read is the literature of the twenties and thirties.

The surprising thing is that this state of affairs has remained almost unchanged for the past twenty years. When I was in college, contemporary literature meant such names as Joyce, Proust, Yeats, Eliot, Hemingway and Faulkner. For students in college today these are still the names that count. If other names are to be added, the ones that come to mind are those of Mann, Forster, Frost and Stevens; and the careers of these writers were well under way thirty or forty years ago. One might well ask, therefore, when the phrase "contemporary literature" will mean something substantially different from what it now means and during the past quarter century has meant.

This question is one of the many interesting ones which Malcolm Cowley takes up in his new book. He doesn't have all the answers, but neither does he pretend to. Some suggestions are offered, some hunches aired; no blueprints are unrolled. What the literature of the future will be like remains anybody's guess, and maybe an informed guess, in matters of this kind, will come no nearer the mark than a wild one. Either way, it's shooting in the dark. But we still prefer to back the expert rather than the tyro, and Mr. Cowley certainly qualifies as an expert.

Although his final chapter deals with the next fifty years in American literature, Mr. Cowley is realistic enough to suggest that literature in its traditional sense may not last that long. Printed books may give way to picture books, TV, tape recordings and other media unthought of now. But in the meantime literary expression will change. For instance, the ideal of "pure fiction," intense and bloodless, will probably fade out. Novels will be less carefully planned, less "correct," more episodic and discursive. A similar reaction in favor of the relative simplicity of folksong and ballad will probably take place in poetry. Instead of sharing the subjective and introspective tendency that has dominated so much of the literature of the last hundred years, the literature of the next fifty may be especially concerned with inter-personal relations. Actually, we can be sure of only two things: the literary situation will be quite different fifty years hence, and the genius who will most significantly contribute to this difference has not yet appeared.

Mr. Cowley's estimates about the future make an effective last chapter because they are "projections" from the considerable data assembled and analyzed earlier in the book. These data have their own interest, quite apart from their usefulness in long-range literary forecasting. The book as a whole is concerned with literature today, not to criticize it one way or another, and not primarily

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to speculate about its future, but to see what it is.

A simple problem, apparently. Until I read *The Literary Situation* I had no conception of how multiple and interesting this problem really is. I wonder now why a book like this was not thought of and written before. It is an unusually *informative* survey of modern writing. For not only does Mr. Cowley describe the different schools, persuasions, and cults with which American writers have variously aligned themselves in the past ten years; he also examines the less theoretical realities of the literary situation: how writers get their work done, how they get paid for it, what their worries are about words, publishers, and income taxes. More than half the book is given over to these inquiries into "the natural history of the American writer." Mr. Cowley conducts this excursion into the sociology of literature with the same acuteness and sanity that mark his treatment of all other questions raised in this original and illuminating book.

Sir Winston's American Grandfather

THE REMARKABLE MR. JEROME. By Anita Leslie. Holt. $4.

By WAYNE ANDREWS

When Leonard Jerome, a New York stockbroker who had lost more fortunes than he cared to remember, and left less money than his three daughters would have liked, lay dying in an English boarding house in 1891, someone suggested that he would do well to read the Bible. He picked up the Old Testament but set it down in disgust. "What *horrible* people!" was his comment on the Book of Genesis. "I've given you all I have," he confessed to his daughters in a gallant effort to force a smile. "Pass it on."

His great-granddaughter Anita Leslie has tried to pass it on. This is the story of how Leonard Jerome, a farm-boy from New York State, bought his way into more than one railroad and steamship line, not to mention The New York *Times*, and of what his daughters accomplished with the cash he accumulated. One of the Jerome girls married Moreton Frewen, an Englishman who invested his own and other people's money so carelessly in the United States that he earned the nickname of "Mortal Ruin." Still another picked Lt. John Leslie, an Irishman in the Grenadier Guards, for her husband, but found that her mother-in-law hid her father-in-law behind a gigantic center-piece labeled a "cache-mari." "After 30 years of marriage, one simply cannot see the same face chewing every day," she announced. The third of the Jerome girls, as you may already know, became the wife of Lord Randolph Churchill and the mother of the present Prime Minister of England.

Judging from this book, Sir Winston was more than impressed by his mother. "She shone for me like the Evening Star," he remembered. "I loved her dearly but at a

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distance." Fortunately she is seen close-to in *The Remarkable Mr. Jerome.*

Meantime Mrs. Leonard Jerome was so mortified by the debts of Moreton Frewen that she refused to light the grate in her boarding house sitting room. "As long as a member of my family owes money anywhere," she said, "I shall not light a fire in my room." Mr. Jerome was not quite so proper. In his last years he spent most of his time near the New York race tracks—Jerome Park was named in his honor—leaving his wife to shift for herself in England.

Since there is a grand story in the millions and the matches of the Jeromes, and since Miss Leslie is a first-rate gossip, it is really too bad that she did not read over the galleys more than once. Her French —she is dreadfully fond of dropping a French phrase here and there— is no advertisement for her governess. And although it would be unfair to say that there is a factual error on every page of the book, it is obvious that the author was rather bored by the bare facts of American history and her great-grandfather's career. You and I may be pretty certain that Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican President, but Miss Leslie insists that Millard Fillmore represented the GOP in the White House back in 1850.

A Writer's Place

HOWELLS AND THE AGE OF REALISM. By Everett Carter. Lippincott. $5.

By JOHN COURNOS

FRESH from a reading of the delightfully Turgenevian *Indian Summer,* this reviewer plunged with exceptional interest into Mr. Carter's reappraisal of its author, William Dean Howells. The result has been both rewarding and disappointing.

The scholarly Everett Carter makes out a perfectly plausible case for naming the era in which Howells dominated the American literary scene as the Age of Howells. He is less persuasive, however, in presenting Howells as having other than historical meaning for the present generation.

Howells preached that a novelist should record only what was visible and observable and let "higher values" take care of themselves. He had an obsessive social consciousness, and he imagined that a factual, accurate presentation of life would of itself serve to instill into the reader the need for improvement and reform. As editor, first of the *Atlantic,* then of *Harper's,* he urged this course upon young writers, and he gave them practical encouragement by printing their works. This "scientific realism," admirable for what it is, inevitably led to the Zolaesque naturalism of Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, etc., and, still later, to Freudianism. But even Zola claimed a social message for his novels, implicit in reality rather than in radiant nobility emanating from a great personality steeped in beauty of the spirit.

Howells shared with his friend, Mark Twain, the ambition to concern himself with "the more smiling

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aspects of life which are the more American." There was more than an inkling of disillusion—it was to come to Mark Twain too—when he read the Russians, and particularly Tolstoy, a disillusion intensified after the Haymarket riots in Chicago; he thought injustice was done the condemned men.

Perhaps Mr. Carter claims greater scope for Howells' influence on the future than is due him. It is hard to escape from the conclusion that he is dated beyond substantial recall.

Justice and Love

NOT WITHOUT TEARS. By Helen Caldwell Day. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

By MARJORIE CROWE HUGHES

IN her autobiography, *Color Ebony,* a few years ago, Helen Caldwell Day wrote of her conversion to Catholicism, which turned her life "upside down and inside out." *Not Without Tears* contains a day-by-day account of the life to which that conversion eventually led her. It is better organized than the earlier book, more simple and more moving, and shows a breadth, balance and a maturity that are astonishing when one realizes that the author is still in her twenties.

In 1948 Helen, a recent convert, became ill with tuberculosis contracted in her final year of training as a nurse in a New York City hospital. It was during the long months in the sanitarium, separated from her two-year-old son (also hospitalized with polio) with, as she says, plenty of time to think, that she resolved her doubts and decided to start a house of hospitality in the South patterned after the Catholic Worker house in New York where she had served as a volunteer. She chose the South because of the need and because "so often Negroes whose talent and training would enable them to do something to alleviate the sufferings of Negroes in the South refuse to stay there; they go North where they can live and work with some semblance of peace and security . . . I do not blame them. . . ." She chose Memphis because her mother was there, and her son, and because coming from that vicinity herself she was known there and knew the problems.

After her discharge from the sanitarium Helen and her son lived with her mother's family in Memphis where she found work as a practical nurse. With a white friend and a Josephite priest she organized an interracial group to study and discuss social problems in the light of Catholic teaching. A year of prayer, study and discussion led to action. The group, with the Bishop's permission and encouragement, rented a dilapidated store in a "mixed" parish near Beale St. to serve as a much-needed day nursery for the neighborhood and a discussion center for the group. Helen, with her son, moved in to run the house and live by and for God's providence. Eventually the need for space and shelter for mothers and children led to the purchase of an old house in the same vicinity which is now operating as a full-time House of Hospitality.

The histories of new foundations are nearly always interesting and this one is well told in vivid sketches of friends and enemies, of much help and many stumbling stones, of joys and sorrows against a backdrop of the tangled, oppressive racial and economic problems of the South. But what makes *Not Without Tears* a warm, illuminating, inspiring book is the simply and humbly revealed operation of grace in Helen Day's faithful and courageous struggles to love God and her neighbor. *Color Ebony* was a cry for justice. *Not Without Tears* is written in love and compassion, a serene use of suffering.

REVIEWERS

Michael Harrington is associated with the Fund for the Republic.

Patrick F. Quinn is a member of the faculty at Wellesley College.

Wayne Andrews is the author of *The Battle for Chicago* and *The Vanderbilt Legend*.

John Cournos is a well-known critic and anthologist.

Marjorie Crowe Hughes was for many years associated with the Catholic Worker movement in New York.

PERSONAL

Among the results of the reader-survey recently conducted among a cross-section of Commonweal subscribers was the fact that an average of 3.9 persons read each individual copy.

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Readers told us that Commonweal editorials are the feature which most interests them. Their second choice, predictably enough, is the weekly feature article.

The special features or controversies which have most interested subscribers in past months include the Catholicism in America series, the Maritain issue, the McCarthy controversy, John Cogley's articles last year from the Middle East, and Father H. A. Reinhold's recent articles on the Liturgy.

As The Commonweal is on only a limited number of newsstands, it cannot depend on that method of contacting prospective readers. Of the present readership, almost half were first told of the magazine by their friends. A fifth were introduced to it at school. A considerable number also were first interested in it by references to the magazine in newspapers or by stories about The Commonweal in other magazines, such as the one which appeared in the October 25th Newsweek.

THE EDITORS.

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STREET _____ | STREE _____

CITY _____ | CITY _____

MY NAME IS _____

ADDRESS _____

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